Testimony to
Senate Veterans, Military Affairs, and Homeland Security Committee
February 7, 2012

The recent announcement of the proposal to eliminate the C-27J cargo aircraft mission at the Battle Creek Air National Guard Base and replace it with an MQ-1/9 RSO mission is encouraging to the Battle Creek community. The ANG Base has historically been a significant part of the Battle Creek economy and community, providing more than $20 million in wages and salaries as well as the local construction industry impact from the substantial infrastructure investments that have been made at the base over the past decade. The impact from the base is not only economic as many base personnel also provide community support through volunteerism and partnerships.

Community leaders have been very concerned over the past several months as the prospect loomed that the commitment for a C-27J mission might not be realized. Without a flying mission that includes aircraft on the ramp at the Battle Creek base, the potential exists to lose the ANG Fire Station and its Crash/Rescue capability which would require the City of Battle Creek to provide this support to other airfield tenants, including Duncan Aviation and WMU's College of Aviation with the lost services. The announcement of a replacement mission based on unmanned aircraft is encouraging in that such a mission would not only allow the Battle Creek ANG base to play a vital role for our Nation's defense system, but potentially allow that to occur on an enduring basis.

On behalf of the City of Battle Creek and the Battle Creek community, I encourage the State to pass a resolution encouraging the US Department of Defense and the Air Force to fulfill their commitment to designate an enduring mission, whether it be the MQ-1/9, C-27J or any successor aircraft, that would take advantage of the operational, maintenance and administrative facilities and personnel that currently exist at the Battle Creek ANG base.

Submitted by: Ken Tsuchiyama, City Manager, City of Battle Creek, Michigan